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Message Text

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71
ACTION VO-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 FBIE-00 INSE-00 NSAE-00 NEA-05

CU-04 SCA-01 /014 W
---------- 105618
R 271119Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5885

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CVIS, IR
SUBJ: IRANIAN ENTERTAINERS

REF: STATE 59741; TEHRAN 2206

1. AS NOTED PARA 3, TEHRAN REFTEL, EMBASSY HAD NOTIFIED FORNOFF "H" PETITIONS WERE REQUIRED FOR PURPOSE GROUP'S VISIT. THIS CLEARLY WOULD HAVE FORCED CANCELLATION OF PERFORMANCE AT GOI EMBASSY WASHDC TWO TO THREE DAYS LATER. FORNOFF PRESSED EMBASSY FOR EARLY ISSUANCE WITH UNDERSECRETARY FOR CULTURE AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS EZATOLLAH AMELI UNDERLINING URGENCY BY APPEALING TO AMBASSADOR. WHILE AWARE OBJECTIONS STATE REFTEL, EMBASSY BELIEVES ISSUANCE OFFICIAL A-2S WAS BEST SOLUTION AVAILABLE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES WERE AS FOLLOW: NOW ROOZ (MARCH 21) IRAN'S MOST IMPORTANT HOLIDAY, AND OCCASION ANNUALLY FOR GALA PARTY AT GOI EMB WASHDC FOR IRANIAN AND DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY. THIS YEAR FEATURED ENTERTAINER TO BE FEMALE SINGER GOUGOUSH, UNQUESTIONABLY NO. 1 POP STAR IRAN. FAILURE TO PROVIDE NECESSARY VISAS GOUGOUSH AND TROUPE WOULD AT BEST HAVE SERIOUSLY EMBARASSED GOI EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, AND GENERATED MUCH ADVERSE PRESS COMMENT HERE, TO SAY NOTHING OF NEGATIVE EFFECT ON EMBASSY'S RELATIONS WITH FORNOFF.

3. DELAY UNTIL LAST MOMENT RESULT OF FORNOFF FAILURE ISSUE
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PPTS UNTIL SUNDAY, MARCH 17, WHEN EMB CLOSED. PPTS ARRIVED

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EMB ONLY SHORTLY BEFORE COB MONDAY, MARCH 18. CLEARANCE WITH DEPT WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE CAUSED SERIOUS DISRUPTION TROUPE'S TRAVEL PLANS, AS ALL FLIGHTS OUT OF TEHRAN HEAVILY BOOKED FOR HOLIDAY. STRONG POSSIBILITY SOME OR ALL ENTERTAINERS WOULD HAVE MISSED MARCH 21 EMB CELEBRATION.

4. EMB BELIEVES OFFICIAL A-2 VISAS WITH LENGTHY CONREC EMPHASIZED ONE-TIME-ONLY NATURE OF SITUATION, AND SERVED TO LOCK APPLICANTS FURTHER INTO RESTRICTIONS NOTED TEHRAN REFTEL, THAT TROUPE MUST PLAY ONLY AT OFFICIAL GOI EMB/ CONSULATE FUNCTIONS. APPLICANTS DID BEAR SERVICE (I.EN OFFICIAL) PPTS, WERE BENEFICIARIES OF ORDERS (FORNOFF NOTE) OF GOVT RECOGNIZED DE JURE BY USGOVT, AND WERE PROCEEDING TO US TO PERFORM DUTIES OR SERVICES ON BEHALF OF SUCH FONGOVT. AT FUNCTIONS WHICH WERE DEEMED TO BE OFFICIAL IN NATURE, PER NOTE 2.1(B), 22 CFR 41.10.

5. EMBASSY NOTED THAT THIS TYPE OF ENTERTAINERS' FLAP HAS BECOME ANNUAL NOW ROOZ EVENT HERE. TO PREVENT FUTURE RE-OCCURRENCE, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO CLARIFY MATTER NOW RATHER THAN AGAIN DEAL WITH "EMERGENCY" SITUATION NEXT YEAR. EMBASSY PROPOSES SIMULTANEOUS APPROACH BY EMBASSY TEHRAN TO FORNOFF AND DEPT TO IRANIAN EMBASSY. EMBASSY AND DEPT COULD EXPLAIN ORALLY AND BY NOTE THAT IN FUTURE VISAS TO ENTERTAINERS CAN NOT BE ISSUED ON SAME BASIS AS TO GROUP THIS YEAR SINCE THIS WOULD BE IN CLEAR VIOLATION OF VISA REGULATIONS. WE SHOULD THEN OUTLINE "HE" PETITION REQUIREMENT, NOTING THAT THIS WILL BE SOLE BASIS ON WHICH VISAS WILL HENCEFORTH BE ISSUED TO ENTERTAINERS.

6. DEPTS CONCURRENCE OR COMMENTS REQUESTED.
HELMS

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